

August 14, 2017

Alison Calderara, M.Ed.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Community Health Centers of Burlington  
617 Riverside Ave  
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Ms. Calderara, Employees and Patients:

As we kick off National Health Center Week, I want to thank everyone who works at community health centers throughout Vermont for the critically important work you do to ensure Vermonters have access to quality and affordable health care.

Today, 155,000 Vermonters get at least some of their health care at one of the more than 50 community health center sites around the state. Think about that for a moment: community health centers now serve one-in-four Vermonters. That is really incredible. And this includes important primary care services like annual physicals and chronic disease management, as well as dental and behavioral health services and access to low-cost prescription drugs.

Community health centers see patients with private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, or no insurance at all. They provide services, regardless of the patient's ability to pay. And every health center is unique, providing care tailored to the Vermonters it serves. In rural areas, they are often the only doctor for many miles, providing care close to home, and often with convenient extended hours.

This means Vermonters can get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. Patients don't have to choose between missing work and better health. And because the care is affordable, they don't have to choose between paying for food and paying for prescription medications. Health centers are cost-effective, too, saving the national health care system \$24 billion in just one year.

I am proud to have secured \$11 billion in the Affordable Care Act to expand and operate community health centers – but our work is not done until everyone in this country has access to affordable medical care when they need it. That is why I introduced legislation to double the funding for health centers, to serve an *additional* 25 million people over the next decade.

But at the end of the day, none of this is possible without you, the dedicated employees of community health centers. I thank you for everything you do to help Vermonters live healthier lives. And I hope National Community Health Center week will help spread the word of your incredible efforts and these critically important community resources.

Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS  
UNITED STATES SENATOR